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FROM: Amembassy HELSINKI

Date Sent: August 22, 1961

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TO: Secstate WASHINGTON

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A story appearing in the August 16 edition of the Paris HERALD TRIBUNE suggesting that President KEKKONEN had made a secret arrangement with the Soviets to recognize East Germany or join in signing a separate peace treaty brought an immediate denial from the Foreign Ministry and vituperative comment in Agrariam MAAKANSKA, a faithful and uncompromising supporter of President Kekkonen.

The TRIBUNE story, written by Roland HUNTFORD and datelined Helsinki, August 15, said:

"There is a growing suspicion in responsible Helsinki circles that the price which President Urho Kekkonen paid for the Soviet Union's waiving objections to Finland's joining the European Free Trade Association was a secret undertaking to recognize East Germany, or, at least, to join in signing a separate treaty."

The denial issued by the Foreign Ministry issued on August 16 reads as follows:

"The Paris edition of the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE claimed, on August 16, 1961, that President Kekkonen, in connection with the solution of the EFTA question, had given a secret commitment to the Government of the Soviet Union on the recognition of the German Democratic Republic or on joining in the separate peace treaty to be signed with the German Democratic Republic. Because of this, the Foreign Ministry announces that this claim is completely groundless. No secret agreements have been made."

MAAKANSKA castigated the TRIBUNE story as "outrageous and contemptible" propagation of "foreign policy lies". The paper said the story could not be due to error or lack of understanding; "it must be a conscious provocative deed aimed against Finland's foreign policy objectives and the head of state". MAAKANSKA said that Huntford had written a "malevolent and false" article for THE OBSERVER just prior to the President's visit to the U. K. last May. "One cannot fail to see that this time the news is opportunely

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published in an American paper before the Finnish head of state visits the U.S." MAAKANSA stated that Huntford is said to be close to "extreme Rightist circles" and that his story was "undoubtedly" published as part of the "unscrupulous campaign" against Kekkonen.

MAAKANSA concluded its editorial by saying: "Although it is clear that he (Huntford) is a tool of certain quarters, there is still the question of the misuse of a correspondent's position, of activity directed against Finland's foreign policy interest by distributing filthy news, and of interfering in the election of the President of the Republic. This kind of behavior must be condemned. It is to be hoped that the correspondent concerned understands he should leave here at his earliest convenience."

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The author of the article is actually the accredited Helsinki correspondent of the LONDON OBSERVER. (The HERALD TRIBUNE subscribes to the OBSERVER article service.) Huntford visited the Embassy information officer August 17 to inquire whether any sort of reaction to his story had come to that officer's attention. He was told that the only reaction he was aware of was the Foreign Office's denial.

Huntford expressed deep concern over his status in Finland as an accredited correspondent, especially in view of the Agrarian MAAKANSA's sharp attack against him and its suggestion that the time was obviously at hand for Huntford "to leave the country."

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